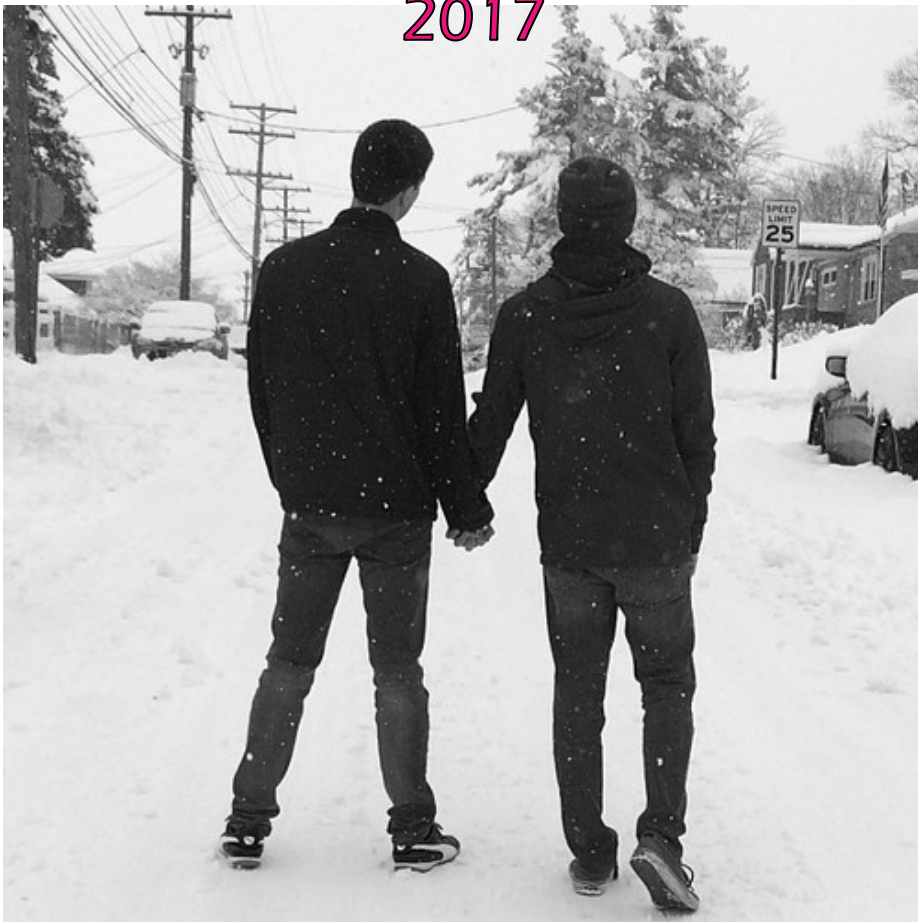


GayWest Journal
For
January - February
2017



£1.50 for Non-Members

Contents

Page

1. Cover
2. Contents
3. Chair's Blog
4. 5 & 6. Pride Experience
7. Miscellaneous
8. Committee Page
9. Member's Page
10. & 11. Entertainment
12. What's in a Name?
13. A Year of Celebration
14. Why Pay!
15. More Poetry
16. Pictures of the Christmas Dinner

Notice - Join us on Facebook you may find it easier by going to the link at the bottom of our Website

Chair's Blog

Welcome to 2017 and the new look Magazine/ Journal. Pay attention as I will only say this once. Your new Magazine /Journal will now be published every two months, this being the January and February edition, as usual on our website and in a limited printed form.

The reasons for this change as I explained before, is due to the reduced committee staff time, and costs.

However the magazine will have 16 pages and will be known as the "**GayWest Journal**". We hope it will be full of interesting items for you to read and hopefully articles from our members. Being a journal there will be fewer listings of events, these will now be on our website and on display at the "Rainbow Cafe".

On the website, event listings that are open to all will be in the event boxes and also on the News Section. I will be starting a regular chat on the members' only section so do get online and chatter!

The theme for 2017 will be to have fun and social events to enjoy, but also giving support as always where we can. The "Rainbow Cafe", as always, will be there every Saturday morning and here our focus will be to have a good social event to start our weekends.

I hope your new year will be good to you and as 2017 will be GayWest's 46th year the committee will work hard to make it a cracker, but we will need your support. Have a happy new year. Colin

Extracts from....

Back in the 20th Century, when I was still a teenager (just) – and a long, long time before I became cynical old queen – I shook a bucket for the miners as a member of an unlikely lefty group called Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners during the Great 'Coal Not Dole' NUM Strike of 1984-85.

I had no idea a film had been made about that unlikely outfit until I happened to see, mouth akimbo, the trailer for *Pride* online a couple of months back. And if someone had told me before I'd seen it that the story of how some well-meaning gay London lefties reached out to a Welsh mining community during that year-long showdown with Margaret Thatcher's government had been made into a big budget comedy film starring Bill Nighy and Imelda Staunton I wouldn't have believed them.

To be honest, even after seeing the *Pride* with my own eyes at the cinema the other day I still can't quite believe it.

And of course, like everyone else, I was in love with the 23 year old canny Irish Commie Mark Ashton (played by Ben Schnetzer), albeit mostly from a distance. Largely for the love of Mark, and perhaps a deeply-buried, highly politically incorrect hope that one day a burly miner might show me his, er, gratitude, I attended meetings in a crowded roll-your-own-smoke-filled room above a gay pub in Islington. (Which were usually, like most meetings, crushingly boring, so I completely understand why the film instead pretends that LGSM was just ten people).

I was unemployed so had plenty of time to shake a bucket . Outside "**Gays The Word Bookshop.**"

I have a recollection of attending some student event in Manchester on behalf of LGSM at which I gave some kind of speech. And I was, I think, at the Pits & Perverts gig at the Electric Ballroom, shaking a bucket again – and very probably at *Pride* in 1985 where Welsh miners famously led the march.

The “Pride” Experience

If I sound a bit vague about some of the details it's because I don't remember a great deal about that era. In my defence I'll say I'm not the only one: Jeff Cole, on whom the young 'heart of gold' 'Jeff' character (played by Freddie Fox) is based, someone whom I hadn't spoken to for over twenty years for no other reason than life, as it does, pushing people apart after pushing them together very closely for a while, reassures me he also can't remember very much. Perhaps I don't recall much because it was another century, another *Millennium*, and I was a different person. With ideals and full of – Christ! – *earnestness*. Maybe none of us should really remember what it was like to be a teenager when we're middle aged. It's just so unfair on *both* versions of us.

What do I think of the film?

In truth, I dreaded going to see it, partly because I thought it was going to be a kind of gay *Brassed Off* (which I loathed – all that emetic London centric condescension), and partly because I wasn't sure I really wanted to remember that era. Particularly since in many ways, and despite the naked homophobia of the 1980s Tory Party, gays on the make were to become the hot pink shock troops of Thatcherite individualism. After all, no one believed in the power of money, shopping and personal reinvention more than they did. The 'gay lifestyle' was to take off in the late 80s, largely replacing gay politics in the 90s – and eventually becoming a straight aspiration.

Pride though played me like a violin outside a soup kitchen, and had me laughing and blubbing in all the places it wanted me to.

Stephen Beresford's script does a near-miraculous job of staying true to the both the spirit of the times, and the leading characters – bringing both alive. It's incredibly well-researched,

If I have a criticism it's that *Pride* is at its weakest in some of its fictionalised parts – the use of homophobia for easy drama (there was never any trouble,

The “Pride” Experience Contd.

In fact, on any of the LGSM visits to Wales), and the ‘sympathetic’ coming out storyline of ‘Joe’ – an invented character – and his stifling middle-class family, all tap into the clichés of ‘the big gay movie’ that we’ve seen too many times before.

Two very different and distant communities under siege came together and discovered they had a great deal in common – and not just that they both knew, as Mark puts it in the film and as I recall (I think) at the time, what it’s like to be bullied by the police, the tabloids and the Government and labelled ‘the enemy within’. After the strike a grateful big butch NUM block vote forced the Labour Party to finally adopt a gay equality pledge which was to help change Britain forever in the following decade when (New) Labour swept back into power.

Pride is a timely reminder that the revolution in the way our society thinks about and treats gender and sexuality came from the left and its ideals of solidarity.

David Cameron’s introduction of same sex marriage was intended as a rewriting of history, a brazen co-option of all the heavy-lifting victories for gay equality by the left in the previous years. If Mark Ashton were alive today he’d probably remind us of that himself. He might also add, with characteristic honesty and realism, that the reason why *Pride* can be such a smash hit now and regarded with such fond nostalgia by many people who probably supported Thatcher at the time is because the miners, the organised working class and ultimately socialism as a political force were historically defeated in the 1980s and no longer represent a threat. And the gays got married.

But then history is made out of strange, tragi-comic paradoxes, which in the 20th Century we used to call ‘dialectics’. No wonder some of us can’t remember some of our personal ones properly.

Taken From MarkSimpson.com

Miscellaneous

The Annual Christmas Dinner

An evening of lovely food , excellent service from both the staff and our visiting guests - the "Butlers in the Buff."

A raffle to surpass all previous ones and the use of an official photographer...

Some of the photos are displayed on the back page, a larger selection will be available to view at The Rainbow Café where you can order copies for a small donation to the funds.



Poetry - Original Sin

This hand behind my back Holding the other
As if some brother Clutching its partner in crime,
The sins of the right hand. Ten tight witnesses
Interlocking, A hung jury Locked in the fingers of indecision
As a hand fills a hand In loneliness Its other;
Awaiting, awaiting another.

Rita Mae Brown

GayWest Committee roles

Colin O'Brien Chairman
Joint Magazine editor
Cafe Host and co-ordinator
Website Administrator

Jim Phimister Membership Secretary
Joint Magazine editor
Finance officer
Website Administrator

Michael Reid Events co-ordinator
Minutes Secretary
Website Administrator

John Martin Outreach officer
Facebook and Twitter Administrator

If you feel that you have talents for committee work, we will be very pleased to hear from you.

Contact us on:- GayWest (See page 9 for new address)

Website :- www.gaywest.org.uk Email:- info@gaywest.org.uk



:- www.gaywest.org.uk



:- www.gaywest social

Member's Page

**THIS IS YOUR PAGE WHERE YOU CAN VOICE YOUR OPINIONS
ON JUST ABOUT ANY SUBJECT AND YOUR MAGAZINE AND
IT'S CONTENTS.**

History of Gay West

There are still a few copies left of Robert Howes's History of Gay West (Gay West: Civil Society, Community and LGBT History in Bristol and Bath 1970 to 2010. ISBN 978-1-906236-75-5). This tells the story of the group's development from its origins as the Bath Gay Awareness Group. More details can be found on the GayWest website.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS From January 2017

To reduce costs please redirect all post for

Bath GCO (GayWest) to...

30, Woodpecker Close,

Bilbie Green, Keynsham, BRISTOL. BS31 2FU

Tel:- 0775 881 0134 or 0785 433 6047

Cheques should still be

payable to Bath GCO (GayWest).

Entertainment

The Bristol Hippodrome programme

Winter 2016 /Spring 2017 Programme is out now.

There is a wide variety of entertainment to choose from.

Their contact point is the Box Office or atgtickets.com/Bristol

Prices are from £15.00 but will vary, so please check.

The Colston Hall has a varied selection of entertainment for its spring season and can be contacted on 0844 887 1500 or www.colstonhall.org



Weston-S-Mare Rainbow Café at Cameo Bar

On the Second Saturday of January, February and March

From 2 - 4.30pm



Committee Meetings :-

The next Meeting has provisionally been booked for

Tuesday 17th January at 2pm

Any member who wishes to attend, please contact

Colin on 07758 810 134



Gloucester Gay and Lesbian Community.

They will meet on the **1st Thursday of each month** at the same venue and time, 7.30 - 10pm. Details of all their social activities will continue to be on their Website. www.gglc.co.uk

Entertainment

Book review ... *Days Without End*

The raved about new novel by dubliner Sebastian Barry. The novel tells the story about two Irish famine refugees in the 19th-century Wild West. Its heroes Thomas McNulty and John Cole are gay lovers who abhor racism, dress as pretty women to perform in burlesque shows, adopt a Native American chief's eight year old daughter to save her life and fight for Abraham Lincoln's slave freeing Union Army in the Civil War. Bloody and action packed, it's also commendably LGBT sensitive.

Worth a read. Published by Faber & Faber Hardback £ 17.99
Also on Amazon £ 12.59 or paperback at £7.99



Carol service at Leyhill.

As you know GayWest is involved as a LGBT support group to Leyhill Prison's GBT forum group at the prison and meet regularly with them throughout the year. Like many of the other voluntary organisations that help at the prison we were invited to a carol service On December 21st 2016. Myself Jim and John attended this event.

We were made very welcome and mixed with the other guests in the visitor's centre where we had coffee and the ever present mince pie, after which we all filed out to the prison's Chapel. The Chapel is of a modern design of red brick but had a wonderful atmosphere about it. A place were you could just sit with your thoughts. All around the walls were many lighted candles which also added to the evening's event. We all sang the best we could but allowed the choir to show us how it was done. There were readings and a blessing from the Bishop of Gloucester. An interesting and pleasant evening of carol singing.

What's in a name?

Some bus destinations have wonderfully romantic names. There's Old Ford in London and Cribbs Causeway in Bristol, even if the actual places don't quite live up to their names. But what about Brazen Bottom? Well, I've met those in but I'm any of deserve a bus named them. there it the



a few of my time not sure them to have terminus after Yet, is, on edge of Salisbury served day a an

Plain, for one year by

intensive service of London buses called Imberbus. I described in an earlier article how once a year a group of bus enthusiasts runs a bus service based on the abandoned village of Imber when the Army firing range is opened to the public. For last year's Imberbus, Transport for London again sent its Borismaster (named after the former Mayor of London and would-be-but-didn't-quite-make-it future Prime Minister), which is decked-out in a rainbow livery to celebrate the organisation's LGBT staff group. Is there something about Wiltshire they know that we don't? Anyway, the date for Imberbus 2017 hasn't been announced yet but if Gay West is looking for a romantic venue for its next picnic, I'd like to make a little plug for Brazen Bottom. Robert

A Year of Celebration

This year GayWest will mark its 46th year. It is also the year that celebrates 50 years since the decriminalisation of Homosexuality and to mark this there are some interesting events on during the year.

As usual we will mark LGBT History month in February with our own History display at the Rainbow Cafe. Also GayWest is presenting a History Talk at Leyhill Prison.

The National Trust are staging a special season of LGBT events entitled "Prejudice and Pride" as part of the Nation's 50 years since the partial decriminalisation of Homosexuality.

The British Museum are marking LGBT History Month by holding a free all day event and talks and creative family activities on Sunday 19th February focused on objects with LGBT stories as part of the National Festival of LGBT History

Robert is going to Exeter for the National Event....

Speak it's name!

Quotations by and about Gay Men and Women

Illustrated with a range of images from the National Portrait Gallery collection in London and with an introduction from Simon Callow.

There is an informative queer quotations book covering prominent Gay and Lesbian figures across time, from Oscar Wilde to Dale Winton. Sadly it is slightly let down by a dull cover design and some curious contemporary subject selections.

Available from :- **Gays The Word Bookshop,**

66, Marchmont Street, WC1N 1AB www.gaystheword.co.uk

Why Pay when you can get it Free?

Do you love your Gay magazines

Those of you who love to read a magazine while having a coffee on a train or Bus, anywhere in fact take note, great if you love the printed version but be aware if reading on line, make sure its the magazine publishers actual online network. There is increasingly evidence that magazines are being copied in their entirety and posted online. Great for the readers as it is free, but it is also breaking copyright laws and could undermine the printed versions of the magazines
Problems are, huge chunks of particle magazines appear online on blogs and websites.

The “tumbir” generation doesn’t care that it takes the publishers of the magazine a substantial amount of time and money to prepare a shoot and interview, only to have it appear illegally in it’s entirety on-line in minutes.
Why buy something when you can get it free on –line? It would be a sad day if Gay Magazines’ disappeared , particularly as some have been around for many years.

We at GayWest do write our own articles and show references where we get some of our information from, if it is known.

Official Notice

When attending GayWest Events, would everyone please make their own way to the venues and book independently where appropriate.

More Poetry

The Twenty-first Century

Let me go
From this day forward
Brighter than one thousand suns
Proclaiming love
Without a word.
There are no bottoms to words,
The bottoms have fallen out
Broken cups
Too cheap to hold, "I love you",
The bottoms have fallen out of words
And cloak-like I cover you
Catching the honey from your lips and thighs
Where love lies.
Holding you
While language collapses around us.
I love you is on touching tongues
Silent in their meeting.
With this communion now,
Let me go
From this day forward
Brighter than one thousand suns
Lighting the way for you alone.
Lost searchers for the Holy Grail will
Follow us in the Twenty first Century.

Rita Mae Brown

